

## ***City of St Charles***

### ***Cultural Commission Meeting***

***June 18, 2013***

***Century Station Training Room***

***5:00 PM***

Call to Order at 5:17 PM

Present: Becker, Hunt, Melone, Brown, Bellaver, Collins, Ainsworth, Manthei (arrived at 5:25)

Also Present: Chris Minick, City of St. Charles  
Carylie Forte, City of St. Charles

Guy Bellaver mentioned he found an error in the May 13 Minutes, on page 4, so Chris Minick asked Carylie Forte to make the change to “building owner” in the Minutes under section re: Steel Beam.

Guy made a motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Charles Brown.

The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Chris introduced Carylie Forte as new to the Finance Dept. at COSC and that she would be taking the Minutes at this and other meetings.

Guy commended Chris on job well done re: his May Minutes.

Chris opened the discussion with a review of where the Commission stands and what has developed since May 13:

The amount of funding for 2013-14 was the same amount of money as was allocated in 2012-13 - \$89,400. But, there has been a significant change in that The St. Charles Heritage Center Museum is going to be presenting to the Government Operations Committee by July 1, for separate funding, the same as the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau and others are funded. So, their \$33,250 will come out of the Cultural Center allocation, but the amount wouldn’t change. So the impact of that is giving the commission an additional \$33,000 to allocate. Anne asked – but do we need to allocate for them now? Chris said it is anticipated that this will flow and go forward for the current funding year, so they would not need to worry about them for the current funding year. Their request is \$35,000. Joe Schelstreet is their President and they’re working on \$35K to be allocated. Anticipating this will be passed by City Council.

Stu Ainsworth brought up that at our last meeting there was a question RE: to the amount of money for the Union Latina St. Charles was earmarked, but was never spent. Has that been returned to the budget?

Chris said that they had a 3k allocation in 2011-12 that was paid to them, they did not have allocation in 2012-13. He checked on that on June 18, 2013.

Jeff Hunt asked if anyone was surprised by the requests in increased amounts from any of the groups? They had discussed Steel Beam and that they had made an emphasis on their taxes going up and so they needed more money. \$48K was the figure mentioned.

Chris had pulled the tax bill for their address and it is \$21K, so where this is coming from for \$48K is anyone's guess. It was said that the commission should only be concerned with their programs, not their salaries or their tax issues.

Anne – would you be concerned if they misrepresented the figure? Chris said in fairness, there are a couple of parcels there and he could not tell who pays for what. 11 W. Main is 21K and 113 W. Main is an apartment and looks connected to the building and is now separated and that is 22K – so add the two and it's 43K, which is close to the 48K that they were asking. Anne said but that doesn't mean they are paying the entire 43K. Chris stated, that is correct, Steel Beam only knows what the building owner tells them regarding how much he pays in property taxes and how it is allocated among tenants.

Kathy Melone: feels they made a concerted effort to increase the funding allocation for Steel Beam, and for them to come back and ask for a significant increase,, it doesn't make sense in relation to how much funding is available.

They seem to ask for a somewhat substantial increase each year, in proportion to what they get increased each year. It seems not fair to others who are serious about using even a small increase to help their organizations. Is Steel Beam being realistic about the funding they need?

Anne: Those organizations that requested a lot of funding, ended up getting a lot. So if some do and others don't, maybe it is to the benefit of those who do request more?

Kathy said that the Commission has been very clear that they are not getting more money, so with the number of organizations requesting money, there is a disproportion with some asking for much more than do others, who may be as deserving.

Chris asked Anne if the easiest place to start the discussion about who should get what is to see if there is a consensus on which groups they will not fund for 2013-14.

Guy or Stu? said – Yes, Water Street Studios. They've been in existence for 2 years, but not here (in St. Charles). They sound like they will be successful, but they're not based in St. Charles, but have a location here, is that something we take into consideration? Do we fund them?

Anne:

The Print Lab (for Water Street Studios) is going to be downstairs at Szechwan Building. And if you look at what WSS is doing, they're representing other groups, just like the SCAC is doing. So they have the requirements. It should probably say Print Lab, and not Water Street Studios, but they have all the requirements other than not being located in St. Charles. But Print Lab will be located in St. Charles. They are doing the same thing as the SCAC is doing. Print Lab will be open to the public and bring in revenue to the city.

Comment was made that Fine Line Creative is not in the city limits but has a St Charles Township mailing address. Have been in business for 40 years.

Guy wanted to know why Water Street is getting funding by not having the business itself in St. Charles.

Charlie Brown mentioned example of Segals (lumber yard) – all the tax dollars went to Buffalo Grove. When that happened, it threw the city for a loop and so started to look at business to fund only that would bring revenue to St. Charles.

Anne: Print Lab will be paying rent to the city. And the landlord is paying taxes and will be rolled into rent that Print Lab will pay to landlord.

Chris: the Segals example is not an equal comparison. They transferred where the point of sales office was up to Buffalo Grove (a fine accounting decision).

Anne: Her thought on this is that Print Lab could have picked Batavia to install their print facility, but they chose St. Charles and it is a very unique idea and there is the access to DeKalb where there are a lot of printmakers. She is familiar with it because Anchor Graphics is on Columbia College campus and what they do is allow printmakers to use their high end equipment to do very artistic things. Based on her experience, she thinks this will be advantageous to St. Charles. Will be a draw for people from DeKalb to come here to get their work done via Print Lab. She has high hopes for them bringing revenue to the city.

Chris asked if group decides to give funding to Water Street Studios, can we ask them to sign off that any money they do receive will be strictly expended at the Print Lab location? The City has a similar relationship with the Mental Health Board recipients.

Anne: Union Latina's core was in Aurora, but they chose St. Charles to do their business.

Kathy: I agree we should support WSS – it sounds like a nice start.

Anne: I feel we should give them something to show we want to have their services in our town.

Stu: How do their services compare with large print shops, like Alpha Graphics? Alpha Graphics is more of a commercial group. Print Lab would be for lithography and printmaking art forms, to be sold at their studios.

Jodi Manthei said 5K is a good starting point for Water Street Studios.

Jodi suggested they start putting numbers down for each group. Start with what had been granted last year, and see if still valid, and add or decrease from that starting point, based on the total funds allocated for 2013-14. Kathy agreed with this idea.

The group agreed to use Chris' spreadsheet up on the screen to see the prior years and the amount of funding available, so they could see a running total, with each amount deducted that was given to each group for 2013-14.

Jodi mentioned that last year they gave Fox Valley Rep \$7500 – do they give them the same as last year because they used the funds responsibly?

Jeff Hunt commented that all the commission members bring a specific expertise to the group, and while he may not have the knowledge about a specific organization, he would take into consideration what others in the group know about the specific revenue possibilities of one or another organization that is asking for funding.

At this time in the meeting, there was much discussion about each organization and so there was a lot of back and forth for what should get increased in allocations for each and how the money should be distributed.

At 39:40 on the tape:

Guy said he thought first of giving everyone the same as last year and then adding 1K to Water St. and giving the rest to SCAC. Why, because SCAC has more going on. Doing simple math, that is what he came up with.

**This was an opportunity to address the organizations that could get more than they asked for, but because of the additional funds as a result of the Heritage Center presenting to the City, the discussion was centered on distributing the additional funding to the organizations, based on who should get what, and why. For example, Anne mentioned that Preservation Partners has always been conservative and have used their funds wisely. So, if they ask for \$9,400, why not give them this amount. No need to bump them up to 10K when they are asking only for \$9,400.**

Jeff and others speaking at same time: Maybe we should put limits on what we can actually cap in terms of what they can give an organization. Maybe we should make it clear that an organization cannot even ask for anything over \$25K. If they need that much, they have to go directly to the City. The Commission has done a good job of making sure the organizations are using the funds for what they say they're needed. So for those asking for more money than others, we need to make sure the funds are used appropriately.

Anne gave a little backstory on how the Commission got started: Fred Norris and the Visitors Bureau took the biggest amount of money and divided the rest to everyone else. So, over time, certain groups were taken out of the whole pie because they needed larger sums of money. So, Anne can see orgs like Steel Beam, and the SCAC and the Heritage Center going to City Council for their funding, due to the higher amount requested.

Charlie: But the reason the Commission is there is because City Council refused the large amount requests in the past.

*Around 6:10 PM, Jeff Hunt excused himself from the meeting for 20 minutes for outside appt.*

Anne led the group in separate discussion about SCAC and what additional money can be given to them for 2013-14. If 13K to them, then they would have a little bit more money, but should we let them know since they have separate entities within their umbrella org.

Ultimately, each organization was discussed, based on what they had previously received, and what they were asking for in 2013-14. Funding was based on merit and their particular request, and then the additional funds (\$33,250) generated from St. Charles Heritage Center were portioned out to each, ending with the following totals for funding:

Final \$ allocated for 2013-14:

Fox Valley Rep - \$9,250  
St. Charles Singers - \$14,250  
Preservation Partners - \$10,750  
Fox Valley Concert Band - \$7,150 (they asked for 10K)  
Steel Beam – \$12,250  
Fine Line - \$9,250  
Sculpture in the Park - \$6,250  
SCAC (new for 2013-14): \$15,250  
Water Street Studios (for Print Lab location) - \$5,000

Total - \$89,400

Stu commented that if you look at Fox Valley Rep's programs, they're probably doing more to serve culture for kids than say, Preservation Partners. We have to look at them as legitimate theater on one side and also supporting culture for youth. They present their programs, a lot of times, at their own expense.

Jodi said that Fox Valley Concert Band was asking for 10K but what are they going to use it for? Anne asked – do they pay their musicians? Answer was that only the Conductor is paid for his services. Funding was going toward their 30 yr anniversary this year. They spend 73% on conductor salary, 11% on concert productions, and 5% on their music.

Anne asked - do we need to differentiate with SCAC so they see that we wanted to give them money for all their projects. Kathy said that Guy will make sure they adhere to what they have said. But Anne said that was not his function, and she wanted to make sure they are aware the Commission was trying to fund all their projects. It was decided it was not necessary to inform them in this manner.

Anne asked the group if they all agreed with the funding as discussed. All agreed by voice vote.

Anne suggested that with a future goal of 100K for annual fund allocation, now is a good time for any members to start wooing Aldermen for additional funding.

Stu asked Chris if he could provide a revised spreadsheet with the new amounts in the 2013-14 column. Chris said he would provide that at next meeting.

The 2013-14 allocation figures will be presented to the City Council in August.

Anne asked if anyone wanted to meet with her at the July 15 City Council Meeting at 7:00 PM. She is going to invite the Print Lab people to join her at Council mtg. and introduce themselves to Council and what they do. Chris said the City Council meeting is at 7:00 PM on July 15.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Minutes prepared by Carylie Forte